

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

YO! MEMPHIS

2001-2002 Grant Amount: **\$6.5 Million**

Greater Memphis Area Workforce Development Agency

2140 South Third Street, Memphis, Tennessee 38109

Tel: (901) 947-5353; Fax: (901)-547-5341

Project Director, Dr. Marie Milam: mmilam@yomemphis.org

Web site: <http://www.yomemphis.org>

Mission and Vision

The Youth Opportunity Movement is a call to action. It provides the chance for every American - employers, individuals and young people - to be part of the solution. It is because of this involvement at the grassroots level that Youth Opportunity is a movement rather than a program or initiative. Every American who is prepared to take the challenges that face youth in his or her community can become a part of the movement. The vision of the Youth Opportunity Movement is that all youth, particularly those who are out of school, acquire the necessary skills and work experience to successfully transition into adulthood, careers, further education and training.

Program Overview

YO! Memphis goal is to utilize its resources to effectively serve economically disadvantaged youth by increasing educational training and employment opportunities for youth living in the Enterprise Community. YO! campuses have been established in five areas encompassing the EC. Each campus has a special focus and is located near many community resources. We are electronically linked to the "one-stop" Career Center System that offers youth a full menu of employment, education, job training and placement services which are augmented by a complement of support and development activities in a centralized location. YO! Memphis targets 25% of the youth in these areas for participation in YO! activities during the first year.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

- Opening and development of 4 sites (Main Campus, North Campus, Orange Mound Community and Douglass Community Centers. Additionally, 6 satellite centers are located in the targeted area school system (5 high school and 1 middle school).
- An exceptional partnership of some 70 committed employers and community agencies have volunteered to assist in the implementation of the program by lending their expertise.
- The establishment of the "YO! Pledge" by Staff committed and dedicated to assisting youth into a successful transition to adulthood and careers.
- The YO! Achievement Academy is a youth enrichment program just being started that focuses on leadership, career and academic development.

KEY PARTNERS/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **University of Memphis:** research support and mentors.
- **Bridges, Inc.:** case management that provides school and community based services including educational support, mentoring, life skills, cultural and personal development, life-time sports and methods in creative expression.
- **Memphis Police Department:** provides security, funds for program support, and volunteer services.
- **Nike, Inc.:** provides mentors internships, summer jobs, and year-round employment opportunities.
- **Centenary Ministries, United Methodist Church:** provides entrepreneurship instruction for 25 YO! participants and business operations experience through Community Pizza Factory.
- **Memphis Schools:** provides intensive GED preparation in reading, math, science, English, and social studies.
- **Tennis (TEAM .K and AKWA):** sponsors tennis in the neighborhood which is designed to provide youth expanded learning and recreational opportunities supervised by a Head Pro and 3 Assistant Pros'.

